

NCLEX PASS RATE MONITORING PROCEDURE

The National Council of State Boards of Nursing issues quarterly reports identifying the first time candidate pass rates for each program on the NCLEX RN and PN examinations.

Each quarter, the Board combines data for each program over the most recent eight quarters and compares the school's overall success rate in those eight quarters with the national success rate over the same eight quarters. When the success rate of the school's graduates is **significantly** less than the national average over a two year period, it is cause for review by the Board.

The Board applies a test of statistical significance to determine if a program's success rate is significantly below the national success rate. A 'Z-score' of +1.96 or greater indicates a pass rate significantly below the national average. For example:

- School "A" – if the pass rate is below the national average & Z-score is 2.50:
 - The school will be working with the Board to improve pass rates.
- School B – if the pass rate is below the national average & Z-score is 1.20:
 - This is an acceptable pass rate because it is not **significantly** below the national average.
- School C – if the pass rate is above the national average & Z-score is -2.50:
 - This is a pass rate above the national pass rate. The negative Z score indicates a good result.

The Board's procedure for schools with a Z-score above 1.96 has the following steps:

1. Upon a finding of 1.96 or greater, request that a plan for addressing the deficiency be presented promptly.
2. Once the plan is approved, a self-evaluation report will be requested in one year.
3. If quarterly improvements can be seen after one year, but the program's overall average is still significantly below the national average, one additional year will be given before the next report is due.
4. If quarterly improvements are not seen after the first year, a self-evaluation will be requested every 6 months for the next year.
5. If no improvement is seen after two years, the school will be placed on probation. If improvement starts to be shown, more time will be given.

The Board works with the school to develop a plan which will effectively improve the pass rates. Schools have universally expressed interest and determination to improve scores and therefore the Board has never yet forced a program to close.

In the event that for some reason a school was not interested or not able to make changes to improve their NCLEX pass rates, the board could face the need to withdraw approval from the school. In that event, the board and the school would need to take into account the welfare of students already enrolled in the program and develop a transition plan for them.

Note on the Use of Exit Tests to Improve Pass Rate Statistics:

At the April 22, 2004 meeting, the Board formally issued in the record its position on the use of exit tests: "While exit tests can be a component of classroom grading, such tests should not be used by themselves to be a bar to graduation when all other requirements of the program are met."

Exit tests and remediation may be helpful preparation for passing the NCLEX exam, but the Board was concerned that the school's interventions lead to improvement of the student's performance rather than failure to graduate.